

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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## WILLING TO DIE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE ROSE AND THE KEY."

### CHAPTER XXXV. LADY MARDYKES'S BALL.

THE autumn deepened, and leaves were brown, and summer's leafy honours spread drifting over the short grass and the forest roots; winter came, and snow was on the ground; and presently spring began to show its buds, and blades, and earliest flowers; and the London season was again upon us.

Lady Lorrimer had gone, soon after our visit to Golden Friars, to Naples for the winter; she was to pass the summer in Switzerland; and the autumn somewhere in the north of Italy; and again she was to winter in her old quarters at Naples. We had little chance, therefore, of seeing her again in England for more than a year. Her letters were written in varying spirits, sometimes cheery, sometimes de profundis. Sometimes she seemed to think that she was just going to break up and sink; and then her next letter would unfold plans looking far into perspective, and talking of her next visit to England. There was an uneasy and even violent fluctuation in these accounts which did not exactly suggest the idea of a merely fanciful invalid. She spoke at times, also, of intense and exhausting pain. And she mentioned that in Paris she had been in the surgeons' hands; and that there was still uncertainty as to what good they might have done her. This may have been at the root of her hysterical vacillations. But, in addition to this, there was something very odd in Lady Lorrimer's correspondence. She had told mamma to write to her once a fortnight, and promised to answer punctually; but nothing could be more irregular. At one time, so long an interval as

two whole months passed without bringing a line from her. Then, again, she would complain of mamma's want of punctuality. She seemed to have forgotten things that mamma had told her; and sometimes she alluded to things as if she had told them to mamma, which she had never mentioned before. Either the post-office was playing tricks with her letters, or poor Lady Lorrimer was losing her head.

I think, if we had been in a quiet place like Malory, we should have been more uneasy about Lady Lorrimer than, in the whirl of London, we had time to be. There was one odd passage in one of her letters; it was as follows: "Send your letters, not by the post, I move about so much; but, when you have an opportunity, send them by a friend. I wish I were happier. I don't do always as I like. If we were for a time together—but all I do is so uncertain!"

Papa heard more than her letters told of her state of health. A friend of his, who happened to be in Paris at the time, told papa that one of the medical celebrities, whom she had consulted there, had spoken to him in the most desponding terms of poor Lady Lorrimer's chances of recovery. I do not know whether it was referable to that account of her state of health, or simply to the approach of the time when he was to make his début in the House; but the fact is that papa gave a great many dinner-parties this season; and mamma took her drives in a new carriage, with a new and very pretty pair of horses; and a great deal of new plate came home; and it was plain that he was making a fresh start in a style suited to his new position, which he assumed to be certain and near. He was playing rather deep upon this throw. It must be allowed, however, that nothing could look more promising.

Sir Luke Pyneweck, a young man, with an estate and an overpowering influence in the town of Shillingsworth, had sat for the last three years for that borough, not in the House, but in his carriage, or a Bath-chair, in various watering-places at home and abroad, being, in fact, a miserable invalid. This influential young politician had written a confidential letter, with only two or three slips in spelling and grammar, to his friend the Patronage Secretary, telling him to look out for a man to represent Shillingsworth till he had recovered his health, which was not returning quite so quickly as he expected, and promising his strenuous support to the nominee of the minister.

Papa's confidence, therefore, was very reasonably justified, and the matter was looked upon by those sages of the lobbies who count the shadowy noses of unborn Houses of Commons as settled.

It was known that the dissolution would take place early in the autumn.

Presently there came a letter to the "whip" from his friend Sir Luke Pyneweck, announcing that he was so much better that he had made up his mind to try once more before retiring.

This was a stunning blow to papa. Sir Luke could do without the government better than the government could do without him. And do or say what they might, no one could carry the borough against him. The Patronage Secretary really liked my father; and, I believe, would have wished him, for many reasons, in the House. But what was to be done? Sir Luke was neither to be managed nor bullied; he was cunning and obstinate. He did not want anything for himself, and did not want anything for any other person. With a patriot of that type who could do anything?

It was a pity the "whip" did not know this before every safe constituency was engaged. A pity papa did not know it before he put an organ into Shillingsworth church, and subscribed six hundred pounds towards the building of the meeting-house.

I never saw papa so cast down and excited as he was by this disappointment. Looking very ill, however, he contrived to rally his spirits when he was among his friends, and seemed resolved, one way or other, to conquer fortune.

Balls, dinners, concerts, garden-parties, nevertheless, devoured our time, and our drives, and shopping, and visits went on, as if nothing had happened, and nothing was impending.

Two notable engagements for the next week, because they were connected, in the event, with my strange story, I mention now. On Tuesday there was Lady Mardykes's ball, and on that day week papa had a political party to dinner, among whom were some very considerable names indeed.

Lady Mardykes's balls were always, as you know, among the most brilliant of the season.

While dancing one of those quadrilles that give us breathing time between the round dances, I saw a face that riveted my attention, and excited my curiosity. A slight old gentleman, in evening costume, with one of those obsolete under-waistcoats, which seemed to me such a pretty fashion (his was of blue satin), was the person I mean. A forbidding-looking man was this, with a thin face, as brown as a nut, hawk's eyes and beak, thin lips, and a certain character of dignified ill-temper and even insolence, which, however, did not prevent its being a very gentleman-like face.

I instantly recognised him as the old man, in the chocolate-coloured coat, who had talked so sharply, as it seemed to me and poor Nelly, with Laura Grey, on the Mill-walk, in the shadow of the steep bank and the overhanging trees.

"Who is that old gentleman standing near the door at the end of the room, with that blue satin about his neck? Now he's speaking to Lady Westerbrooke."

"Oh! that's Lord Wrayworth," answered my friend.

"He does not go to many places? I have seen him, I think, but once before," I said.

"No; I fancy he does not care about this kind of thing."

"Doesn't he speak very well? I think I've heard——"

"Yes, he speaks only in Indian debates. He's very well up on India; he was there, you know."

"Don't you think he looks very cross?" I said.

"They say he is very cross," said my informant, laughing; and here the dance was resumed, and I heard no more of him.

Old Lord Wrayworth had his eyes about him. He seemed, as much as possible, to avoid talking to people, and I thought was looking very busily for somebody. As I now and then saw this old man who, from time to time, changed his point of observation, my thoughts were busy with Laura Grey, and the pain of my uncertainty

returned. Pain mingled with remorse. My enjoyment of this scene contrasted with her possible lot, upbraided me; and for a time I wished myself at home.

A little later I thought I saw a face that had not been seen in London for more than a year. I was not quite sure, but I thought I saw Monsieur Droquille. In rooms so crowded, one sometimes has so momentary a peep of a distant face, that recognition is uncertain.

Very soon I saw him again, and this time I had no doubt whatever.

He seemed as usual, chatty, and full of energy; but I soon saw, or at least fancied, that he did not choose to see mamma or me.

It is just possible I may have been doing him wrong; I did not see him, it is true, so much as once glance towards us; but Doctor or Monsieur Droquille was a man who saw everything, as Rebecca Torkill would say, with half an eye. Always noting everything that passed; full of curiosity, suspicion, and conclusion; and with an eye quick and piercing as a falcon's.

This man, I thought, had seen, and was avoiding us, without wishing to appear to do so. It so happened, however, that some time later, in the tea-room, mamma was placed beside him. I was near enough to hear. Mamma recognised him with a smile and a little bow. He replied with just surprise enough in his looks and tones to imply that he had not known, up to that moment, that she was there.

"You are surprised to see me here?" he said; "I can scarcely believe it myself. I've been away thirteen months—a wanderer all over Europe; and I shall be off again in a few days. By-the-bye, you hear from Lady Lorrimer sometimes; I saw her at Naples, in January. She was looking flourishing then, but complaining a good deal; she has not been so well since; but I'll look in upon you to-morrow or next day. I shall be sure to see her again, immediately. Your friends, the Wiclyffs, were at Baden this summer, so were the D'Acres. Lord Charles is to marry that French lady; it turns out she's rather an heiress; it is very nearly arranged; and they seem all very well pleased. Have you seen my friend Carmel lately?"

"About three weeks ago; he was going to North Wales," she said.

"He is another of those interesting people who are always dying, and never die," said Monsieur Droquille.

I felt a growing disgust for this unfeeling man.

He talked a little longer, and then turned to me, and said:

"There's one advantage, Miss Ware, in being an old fellow; one can tell a young lady in such charming and brilliant looks as yours to-night, what he thinks; just as he might give his opinion upon a picture; but I won't venture mine; I'll content myself with making a petition. I only ask that when you are a very great lady, you'll remember a threadbare doctor, who would be very glad of an humble post about the court; and who is tired of wandering over the world in search of happiness, and finding a fee only once in fifty miles."

I do not know what was in this man's mind at that moment. If he were a Jesuit, he certainly owed very little to those arts and graces of which rumour allows so large a share to the order. But brusque and almost offensive as I thought him, there was something about him that seemed to command acceptance, and carry him wherever he chose to go. He went away, and I saw him afterwards talking now to one great lady, now to another.

Lord Wrayworth, who looked like the envious witch whom Madame D'Aulnois introduces sometimes at the feasts of her happy kings and queens, throwing a malign gloom on all about them, had vanished.

That night, however, was to recal, as unexpectedly, another face, a more startling reminder of Malory and Laura Grey.

#### CHAPTER XXXVI. NEWS OF LADY LORRIMER.

OLD Lord Verney, of all persons in the world, took a fancy to take me down to the tea-room. I think he believed, as other wiser people did, that papa, who was certainly clever, and a very shrewd club-house politician, might come to be somebody in the House, in time.

As usual he was telling an interminable story without point or beginning or end, about himself, and all mixed up with the minister, and the opposition leader, and an amendment, and some dismal bill, that I instantly lost my way in.

As we entered the tea-room, a large room opening from the landing, he nodded without interrupting his story to a gentleman who was going down-stairs. My eye followed this recognition, and I saw a tall, rather good-looking young man. I saw him only for a moment.

I was so startled that I involuntarily almost stopped Lord Verney as we passed; but I recovered myself instantly. It was tantalising. He always talks as if he were

making a speech; one can't, without rudeness, edge in a word; he is so pompous, I dared not interrupt him. He did that office for himself, however, by taking an ice; and I seized the transitory silence, and instantly asked him the name of the gentleman to whom he had bowed; I thought he said, "Mr. Aulmney," and as a clever artist of that odd name had lately painted a portrait of Lord Verney, I was satisfied that I had heard him aright.

This was to be a night of odd recognitions. I was engaged to Lord John Roxford, who came up and saying, "I think this is our dance, Miss Ware?" took me away, to my great relief, from Lord Verney. Well, we danced and talked a little; and I learned nothing that I remember, except that he was to return to Paris the next day. Before he took me to mamma, however, he said:

"A very dear friend has asked me, as the greatest favour I can do him, to introduce him to you, Miss Ware; you will allow me?"

He repeated, I thought—for he was looking for him, and his face at that moment turned a little away, and the noise considerable—the very same name that Lord Verney had mentioned. As Rebecca Torkill used to say, "my heart jumped into my mouth," as I consented. A moment more, and I found myself actually acquainted with the very man. How strange it seemed! Was that smiling young man of fashion the same I had seen stretched on the rugged peat and roots at Plas Ylwd, with white face, and leaden lips, and shirt soaked in blood? He was, with his white gloved hand on the pier-table beside me, inquiring what dance I could give him. I was engaged for this; but I could not risk the chance of forfeiting my talk with my new acquaintance. I gave it to him, and having the next at my disposal, transferred it to the injured man whom I had ousted.

The squabble, the innocent surprise, the regrets, the other hypocrisies, and finally the compromise over, away we went to take our places in the quadrille. I was glad it was not a round dance. I wanted to hear him talk a little. How strange it seemed to me, standing beside him in this artificial atmosphere of wax-light and music. Each affecting the air of an acquaintance made then and there; each perfectly recognising the other, as we stood side by side talking of the new primo tenore, the play, the Aztecs, and I know not what besides!

This young man's manner was different from what I had been accustomed to in

ball-rooms. There was none of the trifling, and no sign of the admiration which the conversation and looks of others seemed to imply. His tone, perfectly gentleman-like, was merely friendly, and he seemed to take an interest in me, much as I fancied an unknown relation might. We talked of things of no particular interest, until he happened to ask me something of my occasional wanderings in the country. It was my opportunity, and I seized it like a general.

"I like the country," I said. "I enjoy it thoroughly; I've lived nearly all my life in the country, in a place I am so fond of, called Malory. I think all about there so beautiful! It is close to Cardyllion; have you ever seen Cardyllion?"

"Yes, I've been to Cardyllion once; only once, I think; I did not see a great deal of it; but you, now, see a great deal more of the country; you have been to the lakes?"

"Oh! yes; but I want to ask how you liked Cardyllion; how long is it since you were there?"

"About two years, or a little more, perhaps," he answered.

"Oh! That's just about the time the Conway Castle was wrecked; how awful that was! I had a companion then; my dearest friend; Laura Grey was her name; she left us so suddenly, when I was away from Malory, and I have never seen her since. I have been longing so to meet any one who could tell me anything about her; you don't happen to know any one, do you, who knows a young lady of that name? I make it a rule to ask every one I can; and I'm sure I shall make her out at last."

"Nothing like perseverance," said he. "I shall be most happy to be enlisted; and if I should light upon a lady of that name, I may tell her that Miss Ware is very well, and happy?"

"No, not happy, at least not quite happy, until she writes to tell me where she is, or comes to see me—and tell her I could not have believed she would have been so unkind."

Conversations are as suddenly cut short in ball-rooms as they are in a beleaguered city, where the head of one of the interlocutors is carried off by a round-shot; our dialogue ended with the sudden arrival of the ill-used man whom I could no longer postpone, and who carried me off, very much vexed as you may suppose, and scarcely giving my companion time to make his bow.

Never was "fast dance" so slow as this.



At length it was over; and, wherever I went my eyes wandered hither and thither in search of the tall young man with whom I had danced.

The man who had figured in a scene which had so often returned to my imagination was now gone; I saw him neither in the dancing-rooms nor in any others.

By this time there was a constant double current to and from the supper-room, up and down the stairs. As I went down, immediately before me was Monsieur Droqville. He did not follow the stream, but passed into the hall.

Monsieur Droqville put on his loose black wrapper, and wound a shawl about his throat, and glanced, from habit, with his shrewd hard eyes at the servants as he passed through them in the hall. He jumped into a cab, told the driver where to stop, lighted a cigar, and smoked.

He got out at the corner of a fashionable but rather dingy street not very far away. Then he dismissed his vehicle, walked up the pavement smoking, passed into a still quieter street, also fashionable, that opens from it at an obtuse angle. Here he walked slowly, and, as it were, softly. The faint echo of his own steps was the only sound that met him as he entered it. He crossed, threw his head back, and shrewdly scanned the upper windows, blowing out a thin stream of tobacco-smoke as he looked.

"Not flown yet, animula, vagula, blandula? Still on the perch," he said, as he crossed the street again.

His cigar was just out, and he threw it away as he reached the steps. He did not need to knock or ring. He admitted himself with a latch-key.

A bedroom candlestick in the hall had a candle still burning in it. He took it and walked quietly up. The boards of the stairs and lobbies were bare, and a little dust lay on the wall and banister, indicating the neglected state of a house abandoned by its tenants for a journey or a very long stay in the country. He opened the back drawing-room door and put his head in.

A pair of candles lighted the room. A thin elderly lady, in an odd costume, was the only person there. She wore a white, quilted headcloth, a black robe, and her beads and cross were at her side. She was reading, with spectacles on, in a small book which she held open in both hands, as he peeped in. With a slight start she rose. There was a little crucifix on the table, and a coloured print of the Madonna hung

on the wall on the nail from which a Watteau had been temporarily removed.

"Has your patient been anointed yet?" said Monsieur Droqville, in his short nasal tones.

"Not yet, reverend father," she answered. They were both speaking French.

"Has she been since nearly in articulo?"

"At about eleven o'clock, reverend father, her soul seemed at her very lips."

"In this complaint so it will often be. Is Sister Cecilia up-stairs?"

"Yes, reverend father."

"Father Edwyn here?"

"Yes, reverend father."

He withdrew his head, closed the door and walked up-stairs. He tapped gently at the door of the front bedroom.

A French nun, in a habit precisely similar to that of the lady down-stairs, stood noiselessly at the door. She was comparatively young, wore no spectacles, and had a kind and rather sad countenance. He whispered a word to her, heard her answer softly, and then he entered the room with a soundless step—it was thickly carpeted, and furnished luxuriously—and stood at the side of a huge four-post bed, with stately curtains of silk, within which a miserable shrunken old woman, with a face brown as clay, sunk and flaccid, and staring feebly with wide glassy eyes, with her back coiled into a curve, and laden with shawls, was set up, among pillows, breathing or rather gasping with difficulty.

Here she was, bent, we may say, in the grip of two murderers, heart-complaint and cancer. The irresistible chemistry of death had set in; the return of "earth to earth" was going on. Who could have recognised in this breathing effigy of death, poor Lady Lorrimer? But disease now and then makes short work of such transformations.

The good nurse here, like the other down-stairs, had her little picture against the wall, and had been curtsying and crossing herself before it, in honest prayer for the dying old lady, to whom Monsieur Droqville whispered something, and then leaned his ear close to her lips. He felt her pulse, and said, "Madame has some time still to meditate and pray."

Again his ear was to her lips.

"Doubt it not, madame. Every consolation."

She whispered something more; it lasted longer, and was more earnest this time. Her head was nodding on her shoulders, and her eyes were turned up to his dark energetic face, imploringly.

"You can't do that, madame; it is not yours. You have given it to God."

The woman turned her eyes on him with a piteous look.

"No, madame," he said, sharply; "it is too late to withhold a part. This, madame, is temptation—a weakness of earth; the promises are to her that overcometh."

Her only answer was a hysterical whimper, and imperfect sobbing.

"Be calm," he resumed. "It is meritorious. Discharge your mind of it, and the memory of your sacrifice will be sweeter, and its promise more glorious the nearer you draw to your darkest hour on earth."

She had another word to say; her fingers were creeping on the coverlet to his hand.

"No, madame; there won't be any struggle; you will faint, that is all, and waken, we trust, among the blest. I'm sorry I can't stay just now. But Father Edwyn is here, and Doctor Garnet."

Again she turned her wavering head toward him, and lifted her eyes as if to speak.

"No, no, you must not exert yourself; husband your strength—you'll want it, madame."

It was plain, however, she would have one last word more, and a little sourly he stooped his ear again.

"Pardon me, madame, I never said or supposed that after you signed it you were still at liberty to deal with any part; if you have courage to take it back it is another matter. I won't send you before the Judge Eternal with a sacrilege in your right hand."

He spoke quietly but very sternly, raising his finger upward with his eyes fixed upon her, while his dark face looked pale.

She answered only with the same helpless whimper.

He beckoned to the nun.

"Let me see that book."

He looked through its pages.

"Read aloud to madame the four first elevations; agony is near."

As he passed from the room he beckoned the lady in the religious habit again, and whispered in her ear in the lobby, "Lock this door, and admit none but those you know."

He went down this time to the front drawing-room, and entered it suddenly.

Mr. Carmel was seated there, with candles beside him, reading. Down went his book instantly, and he rose.

"Our good friend up-stairs won't last beyond three or four hours—possibly five,"

began Monsieur Droquille. "Garnet will be here in a few minutes; keep the doors bolted; people might come in and disturb the old lady. You need not mind now. I locked the hall-door as I came in. Why don't you make more way with Miss Ware? Her mother is no obstacle—favourable rather. Her father is a mere pagan, and never at home. And the girl likes you."

Mr. Carmel stared.

"Yes, you are blind; but I have my eyes. Why don't you read your *Montaigne*? '*Les agaceries des femmes sont des declarations d'amour.*' You interest her, and yet you profit nothing by your advantage. There she is, romantic, passionate, Quixotic, and makes, without knowing it, a hero of you. You are not what I thought you."

Mr. Carmel's colour flushed to his very temples; he looked pained and agitated; his eyes were lowered before his superior.

"Why need you look like a fool? Understand me," continued Monsieur Droquille, in his grim, harsh nasals. "The weaknesses of human nature are Heaven's opportunities. The godly man knows how to use them with purity. She is not conscious of the position she gives you; but you should understand its power. You can illuminate, elevate, save her."

He paused for a moment; Mr. Carmel stood before him with his eyes lowered.

"What account am I to give of you?" he resumed. "Remember, you have no business to be afraid. You must use all influences to save a soul, and serve the Church. A good soldier fights with every weapon he has—sword, pistol, bayonet, fist—in the cause of his king. What shall I say of you? A loyal soldier, but wanting head, wanting action, wanting presence of mind. A theorist, a scholar, a deliberator. But not a man for the field; no coup d'œil, no promptitude, no perception of a great law, where it is opposed by a small quibble, no power of deciding between a trifle or an enormity, between seeing your king robbed, or breaking the thief's fingers. Why can't you see that the power that commands, is also the power that absolves? I thought you had tact. I thought you had insinuation. Have I been mistaken? If so, we must cut out other work for you. Have you anything to say?"

He paused only for a second, and in that second Mr. Carmel raised his head to speak; but with a slight downward motion of his hand and a frown, Droquille silenced him, and proceeded.

"True, I told you not to precipitate matters. But you need not let the fire go out, because I told you not to set the chimney in a blaze. There is Mrs. Ware, her most useful position is where she is, in equilibrio. She can serve no one by declaring herself a Catholic; the éclat of such a thing would spoil the other mission, that must be conducted with judgment and patience. The old man I told you of is a puritan, and must see or suspect nothing. While he lives there can be no avowal. But up to that point all must now proceed. Ha! there goes a carriage; that's the third I have heard—Lady Mardykes's party breaking up. The Wares don't return this way. I'll see you again to-morrow. To-night you accomplish your duty here. The old woman up-stairs will scarcely last till dawn."

He nodded and left the room as suddenly as he had entered it.

### JOHNNY FORTNIGHT.

YES, that's my name, and I'll bet ninety-nine out of every hundred of you never heard it before. But you know who I am for all that. Londoners call me the tally-man; East-enders, I mean, and other unfashionable folk, for of course Belgravia and Tyburnia know me not, any more than they know several other tribes who prey as I do on the dwellers in those parts of London which the swells have only heard of.

Down near the Land's End I'm called Johnny Fortnight. They're fond of queer names down there; they call a little beer-shop a kiddle-a-wink; a bed is a ty; the industrious ant is a murrian; a mail is a boolawn; a well a peeth (puteus my friend the national schoolmaster suggests); a root a mohr; a mine a bal; and I might go on with a page of queer words, for the people are Cornish. They sing their words; and, although a cockney would catch their meaning far sooner than that of a Summer-zeat or Dosset or Devonshire labourer, he would notice, besides the queer words, a lot of queer phrases, such as "Good-night upon you," betokening difference of race.

Is it this difference which makes them call me Johnny aforesaid? No, the reason is that I make them pay for what they buy of me at the modest and equitable rate of a shilling weekly, and their constant effort is to put off payment till the week after, so, whereas I wish to be Johnny Weekly, they

desire to make me what they have taken to call me.

For the rest, I am a most respectable individual. If you met me with my well-combed beard (usually "sandy"—red, say my detractors); my unimpeachable scarf, as neat, breast-pin and all, after a dozen miles on the tramp, as when I started from home; my well-polished boots, which I always manage to keep clean—one can do it in West Cornwall, for even weather like this can't turn pounded granite into mud; my trim leggings; and my pack, which, with its apparatus of straps and the indispensable stick, is a sight to see, you'd never believe that I am the representative and lineal descendant of that dirty, tricky, slouching old Autolycus, the pedlar.

Yes, I'm highly respectable; it wouldn't pay to be otherwise. Do you think my customers would believe me if I was as untidy as little Penrose, the draper in St. Fusty Churchtown, or as unpretending as poor old Mrs. Penaluna, who has been measuring out tapes and staylaces and yards of flannel for the last forty years to a few dullards among the Carn Brea folks? I have a fine presence, what the newspapers call a good physique; and I, the particular I who now write, am a well-known and appreciated "local." It pays, that does; and I am not the only man who takes to it (say the worldings) for that very sufficient reason. Ain't most of the pursers of mines "locals," and many of the "mine captains" to boot, and many of the little great men who put their money "out to use" among the farmers? You see the people trust us a deal more when we're pretty high up in "the church;" and it's so good to be trusted, especially if you have to sell anything that parties must take your word for. And, besides, we know our men and women more, and get a hold on them such as we couldn't get in any other way. The thing is to be a class-leader; one of your class'll always come to you, no matter what his trouble is; and when people do that it gives you many ways of quietly pushing your business. Bless you, you've no idea of the queer things class-leaders are called on to do. I was standing one night near upon twelve o'clock (it was years before this new Act) under the portico of the Commercial Hotel up to St. Fusty, smoking my evening pipe—why shouldn't I take my ease at my inn? Johnny hadn't been some seven years at work without having pretty well lined his purse, I can tell you. Well, I'd come out to have my smoke, and to freshen up a bit after

the dampness of the St. Fusty commercial room, when down the side street I heard a strange noise. It was a blind alley, blocked at the end by a low wall, over which many people in the daytime made a thoroughfare. I looked round the corner, and saw a man, evidently more than half drunk, trying to feel a gap in the wall, and asserting at each failure that it was "blessed" strange he couldn't find his way, what with the moon and all. He talked loudly enough to rouse the neighbours; and pretty soon a door opened, and a clear decided voice, as of one used to command, called, "Who are you, making this piece of work at this time o' night?" Whereupon our inebriated friend began, in the old miner's drawl: "Oh, young Pusser, don't 'ee be angry now. You do knaaw me. I'm James Trembaath upto Ballosinny; worked at the blacksmith's shop this more nor twelve year. Yes, you do knaaw me. I was in youre class for years, young Pusser. And then I took to takin' a drop too much; and that's what I done this night, and now can't find my way home. But you do knaaw me, young Pusser; and there, if you'll show me the way home, I'll tell 'ee what, I'll give 'ee a shilling for the missionaries." Exeunt purser and blacksmith, leaving me to reflect on the strange tie between "leader" and class, and on the possible advantages therefrom to a man in my line. Yes, I must manage to be a class-leader before long; and then if I take a missus and open shop somewhere, as well as going my rounds, I shall do double as well as I could without leadership to help me.

I'm a "local," as I said, and I'm very proud of that same. I'm not one of them that hold to colleges and all that for training to the ministry. Of course the parson he's all dark, that's what you might expect. I've been to hear him, times, and he always speaks, to my thinking, like one who fancies there's something to be said on t'other side; and that'll never do, you know, in religion no more than in politics. No half-measures for me; none of your folks with an aggravating sort of conscience that makes them think, and hesitate, and ask themselves questions. I hate crotchety preachers, just as much as crotchety parliament men. I like a man that goes straight forward, as if he could see the goal ahead, and didn't care to look at anything between him and it. And that's what our young men out of the colleges are getting too fond of doing. Between you and me, they're getting almost as bad as the parsons. But I know

what I've got to say, and I say it; and there's the Book to back me, and if they've anything to say against the Book, why they'd better not say it to me, that's all. I go ahead when I get on a text; I've read Spurgeon till I flatter myself I've formed my style on his—on the best part of his, of course.

Yes, I'm highly respectable; I am so by the confession of the head of all the Johnnies in this half of the county. He's a Scotchman is M'Clutchy; a good many of us are Scotchmen, though they mostly leave Presbyterianism on the other side of the Border. Fine fellows, those Scots; I admire them, though I'm not one of them;—"missionaries" (as I called them at a quiet soir   some score of us had last Twelfth Day at Camborne) carrying with them "the gospel of trade." A great hit I think that was. And then I drew an eloquent contrast between those early missionaries, Saint Perran, Saint Leven, Saint Senan, and Company, whose names have filled the land, and who brought with them but an imperfect creed, which had to be trimmed at the Reformation, and further altered by glorious John Wesley, and ourselves, who carry the perfection of modern fabrics round to the most outlying cottages. Truth in stuff is at least as grand a thing as truth in word; and that is what we persistently preach. How we practise it those must say who buy our articles. One thing we certainly don't do; we never condescend to the shop tricks about the three farthings or elevenpence halfpenny lightly pencilled on when the shillings are as big as half a window-pane. We should be ashamed of such a clumsy contrivance. "No; there's the price, mum; and if you like it you needn't pay all at once, you know. A shilling a week is my rule. Can't make up that? Well; they must be poor gettings where the wife can't save that much out of her marketings. You think the stuff's well enough. It is, indeed, you may take my word for it. If you was to go to Truro, you'd find that's just what all the tip-top county people are wearing now; and doesn't it suit your face too? Black hair and eyes—why, I can almost light my pipe at them," said I, suddenly remembering an old story. "Come, then; if you've set your heart on it you shall have it, as far as I can help you to it. A shilling to start with for a dress like that, and only nine shillings for the whole of it. We'll drop next week; that's as fair as any one could say; and you shall give me a couple of shillings the week after.



There'll be a 'general pay' betwixt this and then, and, unless it's a very bad month indeed, you'll easily manage that much, and nobody the wiser."

That was how I began my first deal with Mrs. Bosanco, in a lone cottage up on the moor behind Nether Bosperrow. She was a rosy country girl, not well "out of the teens of years," with a baby of some six weeks old, her husband working "under tribute" in Wheel Conscience. Things were looking well with them; he'd brought home six pounds last month, a vast sum for a Cornish miner, though our Scotchmen tell me it is just nothing compared with the wages upwards. The poor damp cottage looked as bright and cheerful as stoneware spaniels and groups of Burns and Highland Mary, and cheap glass plates on the mantel-shelf, and German prints on the walls could make it. I thought I knew every inch of my beat as well as a government surveyor; but some of these German pedlar chaps had clearly been beforehand with me. Fact is, Bosanco's house had been empty for years, and I thought, till somebody told me, that it was empty still. But trust those Germans to find out where money is to be got; and they never give credit, so the cruel wretches often make a clear sweep, carrying off every shilling along with the rest of the ready cash. I hate them on artistic grounds. I have my feelings, and I hope I'm not insensible to the beauty of a good engraving. It's just that which makes me so mad to see frightful caricatures of well-known prints stuck about in all the cottages I go into. What can our "societies" be about that they don't do something to raise the popular taste, or at least to hinder the Germans from depraving it? Tracts! We're overdone with them. I can pick enough up any Sunday about the lanes to keep me in pipe-lighters for the rest of the week. How much better to get the Art Union to let them reprint their outlines of the Pilgrim's Progress, and of the Ancient Mariner, and two or three more, and sell them for next to nothing—send them round ready-bound with the book-hawkers. I'd warrant they'd get a sale.

But this is a digression; it shows you that I have my feelings, and that I can be righteously indignant, especially when fellows that I look upon as interlopers flood the country with what is in itself detestable. Besides, look at many of their wares. The Cornish are highly decorous, but I've seen bits of prints that it can never do a girl any good to look at, nor a

boy either, and that in rooms where the big Bible was on the little round table, nicely covered with an antimacassar, in the corner. There's another class of prints, too, bought, I fancy, for their glorious colours; these are simply the cheapest Romanist pictures, of which our unsophisticated folks don't know the meaning. I could show you half a dozen places where the Pope is execrated, and Rome held in reprobation, and yet on the walls are The Seven Colours of Mary, or the Sacred Heart. Yes; I am sure our "societies"—Tract and Christian Knowledge—might do a great deal with advantage in the way of pictures for the poor.

But I was telling you about Mrs. Bosanco. Well, she paid well enough that two shillings, and a shilling more, after letting another week drop, and then, after waiting a good bit, another couple of shillings; and then, without waiting to pay up all, what did she do but buy a pair of green glass ear-rings and a brooch to match—(these Cornish girls are all mad after jewellery; it's in the blood, I think)—and half a crown's worth of flowers—"real flowers" they always call the artificial ones, because they last longest, I suppose. I once had the honour of walking over three miles of moor alongside of Her Majesty's inspector of schools for our district, and he—a Cornish man, too—stuck up for this love of "flowers," and I think he even had a weakness for the rings and glass jewels; "it showed taste struggling against difficulties." I don't agree with him. It wouldn't do for me to give up selling what everybody wants to buy; but if I could afford to keep a conscience (as somebody says—you see I'm a well-read man, thanks to my Scotch friends for that), I'd never sell any of that rubbish any more; I've seen the harm of it, and know how often a fly-away hat full of flowers covers an uncombed head, and a gorgeous brooch fastens a torn dress with nothing but rags underneath it. And as to the mischief in other ways, young Blobbles, who's a "lady's man," could tell, and does tell, too, much about that; and I'm afraid more than half of it is true.

So, mind, I didn't try to sell those things to Mrs. B.; I only showed them with the rest of my stock, and she singled them out as a banker would a false note amid a pile of good ones. Buy them she would, and she'd manage the paying. And she did for awhile; but when her husband for three months brought home nine, and twelve, and eight shillings, and then went

up to fifty, and then down to two pounds, and stuck there for a twelvemonth, she having her second baby, and a long bout of fever, too, during the while, how could the poor woman pay, I should like to know? Of course my way was plain. I couldn't afford to lose; and so at last I had to tell her husband, and the storming rages he got into were enough to frighten a body. He wasn't going to pay her debts, he'd go to prison first; but he did pay a little, and then he could pay no more; he had debts at "shop," and little gettings, and so I was obliged to county-court him; and somehow he did get into Bodmin jail, as he said he would. What could I do? It wasn't my fault, you know. It's that horrid gambling plan that they call "tribute work." Nothing throws me out of my reckoning like that; there's no certainty in a man's pay. Where a man works "to wages" you know what he gets, and what his wife can afford, and in many parts (though seldom in this teetotal district) anything that's spent on your wares is saved from the beershop. But a tributer may get six pounds one month, and nothing at all the next. I was up at Hayle one day, and I met an old fellow I'd known years before as a miner taking in a load of early Cornish cabbages to sell. "Hallo!" said I; "them sort of things don't grow down in Wheal Kitty." "No," he rejoined; "no more Wheals for me. I had two-and-thirty years of it, man and boy; and how do you think I stood when I left off? Why, seven shillings on the wrong side, and one month I made as much as eight pounds. No more tribute work for me; I've turned market-gardener; it pays, and there's no miner's disease."

Let me explain this. In a mine the "grassmen" (surface workers), who look after the water, the stamps, &c., get wages from two pounds five shillings to two pounds ten shillings a month, rarely higher. The underground men are either "at tut-work," the ground being let out to the lowest bidder at so much a fathom, or "under tribute," in which case, after paying their share towards the working expenses, wear and tear of tools, &c., they get a previously-arranged proportion of the value of the tin which they have raised.

This "tut-work" is uncertain enough. The rock varies every few fathoms, and the men's constant complaint is that the mine captains won't set long bargains, for fear if a man has bought a hard bid dear he might come to a very soft bit before he made his length. A "tut" man sometimes

makes very little "when the ground do turn against him."

But "tribute" is as gambling as speculating in mine shares. A man may have a rich lode, and then his gettings are worth having. Half St. Fusty was built in that way by tributers in North Levant. But mines are poorer now-a-days, and mine captains are sharper. They take care to put all the rich lodes to tut-work, and if a man does make six pounds one month they're pretty sure to "cut him down" for three or four months to come.

That's why so many men have gone abroad. As soon as ever the high price of tin forced up wages a little, and so gave them a pound or two in hand, off they went, to the immense disgust of pursers and captains. It was quite a stampede last spring. You see tribute is a poor life. Supposing a man only digs out rock and earth, his lode thinning out to nothing, why he doesn't receive a shilling at the month's end, and has his candles, tools, powder, and mine dues to pay for out of his capital, if he has any. An abominable system, and keeping the men slaves to the shops, always in that wretched state of living from hand to mouth. It's just a trick to work poor mines that never ought to be worked at all, by taking the men into a partnership of the heads I win tails you lose sort. No mine ought ever to be kept on which can't afford to pay fair weekly, not monthly, wages to its workmen; and since mines vary from richness to poverty, mines ought, to my thinking, to be worked by the State.

However, that's not the point; what I say is that tribute ruined the Bosancos, and has done me out of many an honest shilling. Honest, I say, for I'm, as I told you, a highly respectable individual; I'd scorn to do what half the miners in my county would delight in—promote a mine that was about as likely to pay the shareholders as to produce diamonds and gold nuggets. I wouldn't carry lumps of good rich ore in my pocket and drop them where the London gentlemen were coming to see if the ground looked promising. Miners do these things, though they're very religious men. One of them who had turned fish-hawker because his eyes had failed, told me he liked underground best because it gave him more time to attend the week-day evening means of grace. Very religious men; and yet they do strange things—things that I should scorn.

Yet, somehow, respectable as I am,

squire, and parson, and doctor, all look suspiciously on me; they say I sell bad goods, and charge twelve shillings for what could be bought at shop for six. They say I egg women on to extravagance, and make them deceitful, and so bring all sorts of evils on families; and that when a woman takes to cheating her husband about shillings she won't stop there. I don't know; I must leave it to you to judge, my candid public. Remember I'm a missionary of trade; what a grand title in this commercial country! I walk hundreds of miles in the year, in the cause of Manchester and Paisley and Birmingham. I'm a sort of Livingstone here in West Barbary, and as for cheating—not if I know it. Of course quality and all that's the buyer's look out. I'm not going to cry "stinking fish" to please any parson. I just act up to the exigencies of business (that's the phrase), and you know as well as I do, that every plate-glass tradesman of them all does the same. Do Messrs. Hookem and Squeezur rise above my level when they supply some Oxford mooncalf with a hundred pounds' worth of (mostly female) jewellery? Or is the mooncalf's tailor a pattern to Johnny Fortnights when he allows little suppers to be given in his house, and puts down the same, wine, cigars and all, in his bill as coats and waistcoats? I think I'm a good many cuts above that kind of work. I work hard for my shilling; and though I once overheard the parson of St. Fusty soundly rating a woman whom he'd been relieving, and where I'd just called to look after an old account, he didn't convince me that I got it dishonestly as things go. I don't say, with my prototype in Shakespeare, "What a fool is honesty;" but neither do I see why I should shut my mouth "when fortune drops booties into it." Do you, baker, who have been fined for short weight, or more adulterating publican, "call me rogue," an' you will. Like Autolycus, "I'm proof against that title"—at any rate, when bestowed by such as you.

#### THE LESSON OF THE BINDWEED.

UPON our Britain's western coast  
There grows a small green plant,  
Where the morning dews fall faint and few,  
Where the sap is chill and scant.

It springs mid the waste of shifting sands,  
That border our low sea-shores,  
Driven before the winds that rave,  
When the great sea landward roars.

Its tiny tendrils feebly clasp,  
Often and fiercely riven,  
The keen salt spray shakes off from them  
The pitying rains of heaven.

Yet, hour by hour, the pale green buds  
Fashion their graceful wreath,  
The fibres win a wondrous strength,  
From the sea-wind's gallant breath.

Till their patient strength a barrier forms,  
As the years go rolling on,  
That breasts the broad Atlantic's waves,  
On the hollow reaches thrown.

That baffles the might of the tempest,  
That bars the destroying deep,  
From the golden corn, and the clover bells,  
And the meadow's long rich sweep.

Never a work of man could do  
What that little plant achieves,  
Stronger than iron or stone may be,  
Those twining stalks and leaves.

So Fate and Sorrow, rolling on  
In sullen bitter clouds,  
Blotting all beauty, worth, and hope,  
From the world their gloom enshrouds,

Are pierced and brightened, slow and sure,  
By pure Love's quenchless ray,  
By the gentle act and the tender word,  
Winning their silent way.

Till the love of God, and the love of man,  
In their blending glory meeting,  
Show us, here, a life of patient Faith,  
And there, of bliss undeflecting.

#### A SUCCESSFUL TRAGEDY.

"A PHENOMENON! Behold an officer of the Royal Irish, blushing to the roots of his hair!" said Captain Fitzmaurice, laughing, as the servant who had announced him closed the door, and left him tête-à-tête with Miss Marigold Cornish.

"And the reason?" inquired the young lady, settling herself with real curiosity to hear the confession comfortably.

"I thought your excellent uncle never would go!" said the young man. "I have been following his eccentric evolutions this half-hour, and have arrived, dear Marigold, at the conviction that—that lurking and dodging are decidedly not my line. As a detective I am nowhere. Listen. Mr. Cornish left the house with an air of resolution and business that completely threw me off my guard. I followed, and was all but spotted on the instant. Irresolution attacked him. He stopped, seemed about to return, did return a pace or two, resumed his way, halted, examined his left boot, lit a cigar, crossed the street, for the express purpose, as it seemed, of returning, dawdled, was about to march away, but became immovably fixed to the spot by—what do you suppose? A Punch!"

"My uncle is a fanatic in theatricals!" said Marigold, laughing.

"But Punch!"

"His views are liberal. From Macready to Punch, provided there be tragedy, my

dear uncle is a child in the drama's clutch. You have noticed that?"

"Perhaps," said Fitzmaurice. "But, on this occasion, dying with impatience, I——"

"I was impatient too," said Marigold, in a low voice. "Yes, Charles, I could not help writing. I was most anxious to see you, for a few moments, without the chance of interruption. I have had a conversation with my uncle, and——"

"He has relented!"

"Nothing of the sort. At first, he intimated that he did not wish me to marry at all."

"Did he vouchsafe his excellent reason?"

"He merely alleged, generally, that in his opinion, girls were happier unmarried. 'But suppose, uncle,' said I, 'one makes a love-match!' 'Lucifer-match!' said my uncle, 'spark, smoke, burnt fingers! Psha, my girl, there's no love after marriage.' That vexed me, and I said no more."

"Marigold, my darling, do you believe your uncle?" asked the young man, gravely.

"But, Charles, if it does happen so!" said poor Marigold, doubtfully.

"Never, never—that is, with a real love, a love like mine. There are people, dear, who have owned that they never knew what love was, till they had been three or four years his bound apprentices!"

"Ha," said Miss Cornish, a little startled at the boldness of the theory. "But, Charles, there is something else. When my uncle said he did not wish me to marry, he had (now, of this I am sure) a mental reservation—unless my choice were also his own."

"Has he some project, think you?" asked the young soldier, anxiously.

"I fear so."

"We must discover it," said Fitzmaurice.

"Stay. Is not Sir Mordaunt Drury a great ally of his?"

"Yes; and of mine," replied Marigold; "he is joint guardian with my uncle, and can influence him much, if he will."

"He will—he shall—he must!" said the sanguine lover. "Does he call often? Why not send for him on the spot?"

The words had hardly left his lips when a short but imperative knock resounded from the street-door.

"That is he!" cried Marigold, clapping her little hands. "A hopeful augury!"

Unannounced—a fancy in which he was allowed to indulge—Sir Mordaunt Drury quickly rolled into the room. He was a

burly, rather military-looking, old gentleman, with a manner (so far as he found it practicable) formed on that of the late Duke of Wellington, whose costume, blue frock and white trousers, he invariably wore; and whose peculiar manner of returning salutes, with two fingers and a half, he had mastered to the very life.

"This is an early visit, my dear," he said, after shaking hands with both his young friends; "but duty—duty, as a great man said, before everything. Captain Fitzmaurice, consider yourself relieved. My business with our little commander-in-chief will be best despatched without your co-operation."

Fitzmaurice rose.

"On the contrary, dear Sir Mordaunt," interposed Marigold, quickly; "his presence is absolutely necessary. Do you know that we were about to send for you?"

"To send for me?" repeated Sir Mordaunt, rather suspiciously, as he looked from one to the other.

"To tell you a—a secret," faltered Marigold.

"Halt, there!" said Sir Mordaunt, in his most commanding tones. "I know the ground. You don't. Fitzmaurice, will you favour us?"

Once more the young man offered to retire. Again Marigold with an imperative gesture, forced him to remain.

"Ha!" said Sir Mordaunt. "As you will. Duty must be done, break what heads—hearts, I mean—we may. Fitzmaurice, I am a blunt old fellow, and a man of the fewest words. As my ward insists on regarding you as of our council, I have to inform you, sir, that I am here at the earnest desire of my old friend, her uncle, to prepare her for an offer of marriage, which meets with his entire approval."

"Marriage!" groaned Fitzmaurice.

"Approval!" echoed Marigold, faintly.

"I—I think, you must have mistaken him, my dear sir," she presently added. "At least, I can assure you, that no later than last night, he remarked to me that he did not wish me to marry."

"Nor does he, for his own sake," replied her guardian. "The thought is most distasteful to him."

"Still, he might have told me himself——"

"My dear, he had not the pluck," interrupted Sir Mordaunt, hastily; "he knew it was his duty, but, my dear child, that lofty sense of duty which, in men of the



stamp of the illustrious Well—— Well, well, I mean that we cannot always answer to the spur. After leaving the house, this morning, he felt more than once tempted to return——”

“So I remarked,” muttered Fitzmaurice. “Punch decided it.”

“—And tell you all. As luck would have it, we met at the street corner. He told me all his trouble. I volunteered for the forlorn hope, and here I am, not a little surprised, I must own,” added the old baronet, “to find Captain Fitzmaurice in the breach before me.”

“And may I ask, Sir Mordaunt,” said Miss Cornish, haughtily, “who is the gentleman whose advances are so discreetly covered by your generalship?”

“Cannot you guess? Young, rich, well-looking, and accomplished. Nevertheless, so far as he is concerned, I don’t,” said Sir Mordaunt, “care an empty cartridge-case, whether he is successful or no. My duty ends with the breaking it to you—duty, I mean, to your good uncle, whose heart he has wholly won. It’s young Josiah Stichelbach.”

“Mr. Stichelbach!” echoed Marigold. “He never—we always—one sometimes——”

“Thinks him a donkey,” said her guardian, frankly. “It seems, however, that he can do one thing, which has made your uncle his own. You are aware of the latter’s partiality for the drama?”

“But Mr. Stichel——”

“Yes, he has,” snapped Sir Mordaunt, anticipating the doubt, “he has written what your uncle declares to be the finest dramatic effort of modern times. The hero is—a lobster!”

“A lobster!”

“Which,” continued Sir Mordaunt, “while it somewhat augments the author’s difficulties in dealing with the more sentimental passages, opens to the scenic artist, wardrobe-keeper, and property-man, a vista of triumphs hitherto sternly denied them (that’s from the preface). Now, my dear, you know your uncle’s opinion that a good tragedy being the highest effort of which the human intellect is capable, so the man who writes one might, if he pleased, secure a similar astonishing triumph in any other, and lesser line, to which his gigantic intelligence might stoop. Stichelbach’s piece is accepted, and will be produced, they tell me, so soon as a theatre can be erected of sufficient extent to do it justice. The cost of mounting it will not be excessive—some

thirty thousand pounds. Now, my dear child, it is no part of my duty to criticise your uncle’s tastes and opinions. I can only place the fact before you. This young fellow has succeeded in winning his admiration and regard, and to your own kind heart and sense of duty, I commit the result.”

There was dead silence in the room for a full minute after the conclusion of Sir Mordaunt’s speech. It was broken by Marigold, who, raising her sunny face from the hands that had concealed it, asked the singular question:

“Sir Mordaunt, you have seen this play of Mr. Stichelbach’s. Is it really an effort of genius? Would you, for example, class it with Shakespeare’s?”

“Ahem,” said Sir Mordaunt. “Well, Shakespeare, and Stichelbach, my love, are the lights of different ages. There are unquestionably points of resemblance, striking points! Josiah’s play is in five acts. So were Shakespeare’s. The Swan of Avon wrote in blank verse. In blankness, Josiah equals, if he does not beat him hollow. In exalted sentiment, it may be that—but my friend Cornish, you know, regards as the highest drama that which appeals most strongly, most directly, to the general sympathies. ‘Richardson, sir,’ he once remarked to me, ‘and, perhaps, Fitzball, were the greatest dramatists of the last generation. Has any one excited more emotion, provoked more sympathy, conjured up more terror, kindled more generous resentments, stimulated more desperate courage, than these great men? Show me, sir, a similar mastery over the seething passions of any audience in any theatre of our own day! Who was it that first taught us the true value, and influence upon society, of the theatrical ghost? Why, Richardson. Who proved that the addition of fetters and ochre—hitherto held incompatible with immaterial existence—only enhanced the filmy terror? Sir, Fitzball.’ And, my dear, to say truth,” concluded Sir Mordaunt, “our worthy Josiah seems to be much of that opinion.”

Miss Cornish rose, crossed the room, and took both her guardian’s hands in hers.

“Thanks, my dear friend,” she said. “You have told your story. Now you must hear ours.”

“Ours!”

“I have said that, when you luckily came in, we were about to send for you.”

“We!” repeated Sir Mordaunt, discontentedly.

"Charles and I. To entreat you, dear Sir Mordaunt, who can do as you please with my uncle, to learn from him whether he had not in his mind some marriage project regarding me."

"And I have done it, you perceive, very effectually!" replied the baronet, cheerfully.

"But—but this arrangement does not exactly suit us, dear!" pleaded pretty Marigold, with flushed cheeks and glistening eyes.

"It must," replied Sir Mordaunt, peremptorily.

"Why?"

"Duty, my love. 'Cornish expects that every niece—' Such was the sentiment, if not the precise words, in which the heroic Well—that is the immortal Nel——"

"But, dear Sir Mordaunt, Mr. Stichelbach is all but a stranger!"

"If Stichelbach were fifty strangers, and 'Charles,' as you style Captain Fitzmaurice, and yourself, had spooned and squabbled since babyhood, it comes to the same thing. If Fitzmaurice," added the old gentleman, rather regretfully, as he glanced at the handsome eager face of the young suitor, "had written a tragedy, then, indeed——"

"How can you say he has not?" asked Marigold, mysteriously.

"I!" ejaculated the young gentleman.

"Hold your tongue, sir," said Marigold, imperiously. "The modesty of these poets!"

"I never wrote a line since I was at college, worse luck!" muttered the lover disconsolately.

"Do you mean this, Marry?" asked good-natured Sir Mordaunt, visibly brightening. "Can Ch—psha!—Captain Fitzmaurice do anything in that line? By George! if so, it might not be too late."

"My dear kind friend!" sobbed Marigold.

"Ay, ay, my love, that's all very well," said Sir Mordaunt, uneasily. "But business first. If Charley—hang it, Charles—will give us a scene, even a passage or so, from this drama, we will see what can be done. Come, sir, if ever memory answered to the spur, now is the time! Begin."

The young soldier coloured to the roots of his hair, hesitated a moment, then said:

"My dear sir, not even under such temptation can I bring myself to repay your trusting kindness with hypocrisy and deceit. I never——"

He was interrupted by the entrance of the footman.

"My master, Sir Mordaunt, sends his

compliments," said Mr. Jeames, "and would be 'appy to see you in his libery, as soon as convenient."

"There, that will give you time to send for the manuscript!" said the old gentleman, with a twinkle of mischief in his eye. "Or, at any rate, to collect your thoughts. I'll bring him up, never fear. But, mind you, the more high-flown and tragical the better. Hang the matter. Tone, sir, tone is all!"

And the baronet, with a glance of laughing encouragement, bustled away.

"Come, it is not so difficult after all!" said Fitzmaurice, gaining courage as he marched up and down the room. "Tone, eh!"

But the inspiration would not come. Tone, he found, was not, strictly speaking, the sum-total of what was required. A certain infusion of significance, of intelligibility, would be demanded, even by the enthusiastic admirer of Fitzball. In vain the unhappy young man smote his forehead, and rolled his eyes in the most approved fashion. Nothing would come. All the time poor Marigold watched the labouring bard, following every movement with wistful eyes; but forbearing the slightest interruption, lest some infant tragedy, destined to be the parent of so much joy, should perish in the moment of its birth.

Time, however, declined, even at the request of pretty little Marigold, to slacken his pace one instant. It seemed as if the sound of Sir Mordaunt's steps had hardly died away, when he was heard returning, chatting as he came, with the master of the house, who accompanied him. As they entered, Marigold thought the face of the former looked bright and encouraging.

Mr. Cornish shook hands with Fitzmaurice with some cordiality.

"I knew your father well, Captain Fitzmaurice," said the old gentleman, "and regret that I have seen so little of his son. My friend Drury tells me that you have desired a more intimate acquaintance, and it gives me additional pleasure to learn that your visit to my niece at this early hour was prompted by a desire to seek my assistance in a matter you have very much at heart."

"Ahem," said Captain Fitzmaurice. "Sir, I——"

"May I ask in what manner I can serve you, sir?" resumed the old gentleman a little stiffly.

Fitzmaurice glanced despairingly at his ally, Sir Mordaunt.

"He will never, Cornish, have the courage to tell you," observed the latter.

"Why so?"

"Come, man, out with it boldly," said Drury.

"Sir Mordaunt himself," said Fitzmaurice, "can best explain, I——"

"Well, Drury, explain," said Mr. Cornish.

"Come, then," replied his friend. "Fitzmaurice has heard of your attachment to the poetic drama, and——"

"Partakes it, probably?" exclaimed old Cornish, eagerly.

"Partakes it! Sir, he has written a tragedy!"

And Sir Mordaunt threw into the last word a solemnity that all but defeated its own purpose.

"A tragedy?"

"But, my dear sir," murmured Fitzmaurice apart to his too-zealous supporter.

"Don't be a fool!" was the answer, in the same tone.

"My dear young friend," said Mr. Cornish, "it will afford me the sincerest pleasure to hear you read your piece."

"With all my heart!" replied Fitzmaurice, growing desperate. "Any day. Suppose we say—Monday fortnight!"

"Monday fiddlestick!" said old Cornish, impatiently. "My good sir, why not now?"

"I—I haven't got it with me."

"We'll send for it!" exclaimed the enthusiastic old gentleman. "Ring, my dear."

"It is of no use, believe me," said the persecuted poet. "I have—ahem—lent it to a lady."

"Provoking! But I was not aware, Captain Fitzmaurice, of this talent of yours," said Mr. Cornish.

"Nor I either!" muttered the young gentleman.

"Can't you remember a few passages?"

"Yes," put in Sir Mordaunt, "like those you recited to-day!"

Fitzmaurice darted a glance of anger at his tormenting friend.

"Sir Mordaunt is jesting," he said, slowly. "He knows I have no memory."

"Nonsense. Only shyness. Say anything, man," added Sir Mordaunt, under his breath.

"Listen, now, Marigold," said her uncle, settling himself comfortably to hear.

"Indeed, I shall," said Marigold, smiling.

Fitzmaurice rose reluctantly.

"Well, since I must——" he said.

"He seems already rapt in his sub-

ject," said Sir Mordaunt, apart to his brother-guardian.

The latter nodded.

Throwing himself into an attitude, and employing the lowest tones he found convenient, Captain Fitzmaurice intrepidly began:

"In these deep solitudes and awful cells——"

"That sounds Pope-ish, doesn't it?" observed Mr. Cornish.

"Your motto, eh?" said Sir Mordaunt.

"But come to your own, my boy!"

"Certainly, certainly. Where was I? Ah!

Umbrageous barren shades—without a leaf!

To your mild ears do I confide my grief."

"Good," remarked Mr. Cornish. "But a teaser for the artist! Leafless shade? Keep your leaves on—it's better."

"My dear sir, by all means," said the poet. "With the greatest pleasure. I proceed:

A heart inflexible—a rigorous sire—

Showers their dire ire upon my higher desire."

"Too many ires, eh?" suggested Mr. Cornish.

"The scene's in Ireland, you know," put in Sir Mordaunt, boldly. "Unities of the drama."

"Ah," said his brother critic.

Captain Fitzmaurice, warming to his work, proceeded:

"Lapt in Elysium (how should I doubt it?)

Come forth, sweet shade—ahem—and—and——"

"Tell us all about it?" prompted Sir Mordaunt, laughing. "Some affection, but more curiosity, I should say."

"Have the goodness, Drury, to reserve these remarks, at least until we have heard more of this very singular piece," said Mr. Cornish, warmly. "Pray, sir, proceed, and excuse the interruption."

Sir Mordaunt rubbed his hands, and glanced triumphantly at his ward.

"I am only giving you fragments, you see," said the poet:

"And, oh, forgive me, princess all too dear!

The fatal love that brought you, me, that is, one of us——"

"Both of you, of course, 'here,'" said the baronet.

"Now, pray, Drury be quiet," remonstrated his friend. "This is, perhaps, the crisis of the play."

Fitzmaurice made another plunge:

"While round your brows the rays of glory glisten, Angelic sprite! be kind enough to listen."

"Politely put," remarked Sir Mordaunt.

"Excellent!" said Mr. Cornish.

"Now comes the passion!" resumed Fitzmaurice.

"How! Dost thou fly me?"

"Magnificent!" exclaimed Cornish, excitedly:

"—What is that I see?"

A rival, as I live! 'Tis he! 'Tis she!"

"Who?" asked Sir Mordaunt.

"Pray, pray, be quiet!" urged his friend. Fitzmaurice pretended to draw a dagger.

"Death, to my succour!"

"Good, good!" shouted the enthusiast.

"It makes one shudder!"

"Let him die in peace," advised the baronet. "Down with your curtain!"

Fitzmaurice took the hint:

"—Fold me in thy pall,

Forget me not—think of me—think—That's all."

Mr. Cornish started up, and caught him by both hands:

"My dear young friend," exclaimed the excitable old gentleman. "I am as much astonished as delighted at your powers. A man who, at your years, can not only write, but act—yes, sir, act—is a phenomenon, indeed, in this age. It is true, I did not clearly understand, could not closely follow, the—the plot. But that was my fault. Emotion—"

"My good friend," said Sir Mordaunt. "Surely you understood that it was a prince, who—"

"Yes, yes, a prince. In love."

"Exactly. To whom a certain cruel guardian had refused his ward."

"A selfish, tyrannical guardian. I see. It is a fine situation, finely delineated."

"No wonder. The writer has felt it."

"How—like the unfortunate prince?"

"Just so. And, can you guess who is the tyrant?"

"Who could play the tyrant in such a case?" asked Mr. Cornish, his eyes yet twinkling with recent tears.

"Yourself!"

"I! I detest all tyranny. The domestic worst of all. There is less appeal."

"If so, you pity the oppressed and the deserving. Here they are," said the old baronet, taking a hand of each of the young people. "Cornish, we were about to make a serious mistake. Charles Fitzmaurice loves our Marigold, who returns his affection. You would have known it long before, but for the terror your iron rule (you wicked old tyrant, who 'detest all tyranny') has inspired. Now, unless you relent, what will you call yourself?"

"When a man's allies turn against him," said old Cornish, "the game is usually up. If

Blucher, instead of pursuing the French from Waterloo, had ridden up to your idol, the duke, and said, 'My dear duke, I am sorry to thwart your plans, but our feelings have changed, and Bulow is at this moment attacking your rear,' there would probably have been a row. Drury, Drury, you have thrown me over! And Stichelbach—"

"My dear old friend," replied Sir Mordaunt, "you must at least admit that Charles Fitzmaurice possesses equal advantages with Mr. Stichelbach, with the additional claim of having at least ascertained the young lady's disposition as regards himself—a precaution Mr. Stichelbach disdains."

Cornish paused for a moment.

"Well, well, be it as you wish," he said, at length. "And, Fitzmaurice," he added, smiling, "when this play is produced, as it cannot fail to be, you may reflect that to your own genius and industry is due—"

Fitzmaurice, who had spoken a word apart to his Marigold, came forward at this moment, and took the old gentleman's hand. His colour was heightened as he said:

"My dear sir, your frank and generous conduct severely reproves the little deceit that (under strong temptation, you must allow) I ventured to practise upon you. With shame and regret, I have to own that I never wrote a line of tragedy in all my life."

"What, sir! These passages not your own!" roared the old gentleman, excitedly.

"Oh, these! Of course, of course, but—"

"There, that will do" (and he sat down, with a beam once more on his benevolent face). "Sir, the man that could improvise such lines, could write at leisure a noble drama! Take your prize. I shall miss you, my love," he added, embracing his pretty ward; "but it's no matter. Marry the poet my dear Marry."

#### THE PIGMIES OF SYLT.

WHEN the Frisians first arrived in the island of Sylt, near Schleswig, they found there a whole race of little people, who chiefly dwelt in caves about the heath, and were therefore called the Underlings. The life of these pigmies was simple, but very jovial. They wore red caps on their heads, chiefly lived on berries and shell-fish, varying these sometimes with birds and shell-fish, which they caught for themselves.



The knives, hatchets, and battle-axes which they used were of stone, ground by their own hands, and they made pots of the same material. Generally, however, they disliked work, loving better to dance upon their mountains in the bright moonlight, and to supply their wants by theft. They would indeed pilfer whatever came within their reach, not excluding women and children; and they had, too, a knack of changing their own children for those of other people. Without exception they were all heathens, and great adepts in witchcraft, and could transform themselves into various kinds of animals. As evil destiny would have it, the fortunes of these merry mischievous dwarfs became mixed up with those of the merman, Ekke Nekkepenn, though there was no relationship between them. Ekke indeed was a malignant being of huge size.

His first adventures were with ordinary mortals. The crew of a ship sailing to England through a terrific storm that threatened them with immediate destruction, were much astonished when they saw a large human form rise before them out of the sea, and heard it request to speak to the captain. When the captain appeared upon deck, the spectre explained that he was a merman, whose proper abode was at the bottom of the sea, that his better half was on the point of increasing the marine population, and that if the captain's wife would come to her assistance, he would be infinitely obliged. The captain's very natural reply that he could not allow his wife to do anything of the kind diminished the merman's civility, and he roundly declared, that if his petition was refused, the lady below would stir up the billows so furiously that the destruction of the ship would be inevitable. Fortunately the captain's wife, who had overheard the conversation, bravely resolving to sacrifice herself to the captain and his crew, leaped without hesitation into the raging waters, and disappeared with the merman.

The storm ceased at once, but the captain was disconsolate till he heard from the depths below an old Frisian lullaby song, showing that a child had been born beneath the water, and that, consequently, he need not despair of seeing his wife. And, sure enough, she soon emerged from the sea, and returned to the ship, scarcely wet, with an apronful of gold. This had been the merman's reward for the assistance given to his consort. The rest of the voyage was fair, and the captain reached land in safety; but when he set sail again he left his wife at his home in Rantum.

Mermaids can grow old as well as other people, and after a lapse of years it struck the merman that his wife Rom had become exceedingly aged and ugly, and he be-thought himself of the beauty of the captain's wife without reflecting that she must grow old too. The appearance of the well-known ship sharpened his evil inclinations, for it seemed to him that he might conveniently desert his wife, destroy the captain by means of a tempest, and secure the lady. So with a hypocritical face he told Rom that he was going to catch a few herrings, and asked her to grind some salt that they be duly pickled. The good old dame obeyed her lord, and the result of her salt grinding was so tremendous a maelstrom that the ship, with all her crew, was at once sucked into the vortex. His happy plan having proved so far successful, the merman swam ashore, and walked along the coast, in sailor's attire, till he met with a young damsel, who was, in fact, the captain's daughter, Inga, exceedingly like her mother, as she looked in bygone days. This, then, was the object of his thoughts, and he began to talk to the maiden in a gallant style, which she did not at all appreciate. However, he contrived to put a golden ring upon her finger, and a golden chain about her neck, and declared that in three days she must be his bride, if she did not discover his name. He then released her, and she promised to meet him on the following evening. All the intervening time she passed in endeavouring, by dint of inquiry, to learn the name of her unwelcome admirer. Inquiries, however, proved but vain, and she walked dismally to the trysting-place, where she fancied that she heard the voice of some one singing in the mountain. These were the words:

"To-day I'll brew, to-morrow bake,  
And all for lovely Inga's sake,  
Who soon will be my bride.  
My name is Ekke Nekkepenn;  
I know it well myself, but then  
'Tis known to none beside."

"Aha," cried she, recognising the voice of her adorer. "You are Ekke Nekkepenn, and I am Inga, of Rantum, and there I mean to remain." She immediately ran off, but neglected to return the ring and the chain.

Ekke vented his rage on all the people of Rantum, his practical jokes being of the most extensive kind. Ships were sunk without mercy, the old lady at the bottom of the sea catching the bodies of her victims in a net.

The direful failure of Ekke Nekkepenn

with the maiden of Rantum caused him to turn over in his mind what he had heard about the little people who resided on the heath, and he asked himself whether by chance he might not have a better chance with an Underling than with a Frisian. He bent his steps in the right direction, and, in a hill situated in the Red Cliff, towards the northern extremity of Sylt, settled himself in a cavern, and began to woo a fair dwarf in good earnest. But here his case was worse than at Rantum, for Inga had at least treated him with respect, whereas the sharp little creature insulted him to his face. In his perplexity he called on King Finn, the absolute sovereign of all the Underlings, who resided in the Giant Hill on the heath, and who happened to be in an excellent temper, having just married a lovely Frisian girl of Braderup.

Ekke, surprised at the king's success under circumstances which he had found so unfavourable, and thinking that example might be more instructive than precept, asked for the particulars of the wooing, and his request was readily accorded. The women of Sylt were commonly subjected to much hard labour, and King Finn had been informed that a certain damsel of Braderup had once expressed to a female friend her envy of the Underlings, who passed the greater part of their time in dancing and singing. As this damsel once passed the hill where he resided, he seized on the opportunity to ask if she really meant what she had said. A hearty "yes" was the reply, and the same answer was made to his request that she would remain where she was, and become his wife. Most magnificent was the feast held in honour of the wedding. The dwarfs, invited from every part, brought each a present, one a pipkin full of berries, another a thimbleful of milk and honey, a third a mousetrap, and so on, and splendidly were they regaled with herrings' roe, salted eggs, oysters, and mead. The king was enthroned on the Sesselstein, the stone whence he derived his power, wrapped in a cloak of mouse's skin, and crowned with a diadem of jewels in the shape of a sea hedgehog, and by him sat his young queen, dressed in a garment apparently made of the wings of moths, with a wreath of flowers interspersed with diamonds on her head, and a ring on every finger.

When he heard of the happiness that resulted from King Finn's marriage, the emulation of Ekke Nekkepenn was fired, and he thought that he, too, might pos-

sibly be fortunate if he tried his hand at Braderup, although he had failed at Rantum. So thither he proceeded, and violently seizing a young maiden, who usually wore male attire, that she might not be carried off by the Underlings, refused to let her go till she had solemnly promised to become his wife within a year and a day. And now he might have been as happy as King Finn, had it not been for his foolish habit of singing aloud about the peculiarities of his own name. Night after night, in the neighbourhood of Braderup, he roared out the choice verses cited above, with the difference, that for "lovely Inga" was substituted "Dorte Bundis." This was overheard by the good folks of Braderup, who were very much annoyed, and guarded their wives and daughters more vigilantly than ever, determined that the Underlings should not repeat their old tricks with impunity. As for Ekke, they drove him from his cavern by a forcible appeal to his nostrils; piling before the entrance such a quantity of dead animals, that the place bears to this very day a name referring to the combination of ill smells.

He returned deeply humiliated to King Finn, who showed but scant sympathy. When he had captured the girl, he should have held her fast, whereas, like a sea-calf as he was, he must needs sing his stupid song, and thus throw away all his chances. That was of no great consequence. Much more serious was the consideration that, by his lubberly conduct, he brought all the Underlings into discredit, though really they held themselves irresponsible for him and his blunders. Let him go to Hörnum (the southern branch of the island) or to the sea; with the smart little fellows on the heath, he was too stupid to associate. To this effect spake King Finn, whereupon Ekke lost his temper, declared that he was as good a man as the speaker, and seating himself on the Sesselstein, asserted that he thus became king of all the Underlings in lieu of Finn, until some strong hand could remove him. Finn answered this boast by dealing a blow at Ekke's head, which exerted from him a grunt, but did not move him in the least. He therefore threatened to bring his stone axe, but Ekke vaunted the thickness of his own skull, and defied him to do his worst. The axe was brought, but before it was used, Finn said to his queen, who some weeks before had presented him with an heir, that a ship was moored in the neighbourhood, manned by a troop of monkeys, who played all sorts of diverting tricks. If Ekke would kindly

take care of the baby, Finn and his queen would go to see the monkeys.

Now curiosity was one of Ekke's weak points, and at the first impulse, overlooking the extraordinary change from deadly enmity to confiding friendship, he leaped from the throne and declared that he would go too. This, thought Finn, was the time for using the axe, but Ekke had reconsidered the position, and leaped back into his seat. Still he was determined not to miss the sight, so when the king and queen had just started, he strapped the stone to his back, and trudged in the direction indicated, puffing and blowing as he went, till at last he felt so weary that he was forced to lay the stone on the ground, though he took good care to sit upon it. There he sat all night staring towards the sea, but not so much as a ship was to be seen, much less a crew of monkeys. Day broke, and at last a troop of dwarfs appeared dragging along a huge something, in shape like a barrel, but with a human head and the tail of a fish. As it approached, Ekke perceived to his horror that it was his old wife. He implored the dwarfs to pitch the old lady back into the sea; he insisted that, as he sat upon the Sesselstein, he was their lawful sovereign, and they were bound to obey him. But all to no purpose; the dreaded form came nearer and nearer, and he sprang into the water followed by his determined spouse. The Sesselstein is still to be found on the spot where he then left it.

By thus wisely forming an alliance with the lady Rom, the Underlings had got rid of a serious nuisance, but Ekke's expulsion had come too late. His misdeeds had brought the whole race of little people into greater disrepute than ever, and they were ill-used by the Frisians whenever they fell into their hands. The Frisians were of gigantic stature and the Underlings were dwarfs. Still, under the circumstances, some bold step must be taken, and Finn, though he knew that the removal of the Sesselstein had deprived him of authority, felt it his duty to summon all his subjects to a moonlight meeting on the heath, near the mountain which had been the royal residence. Every variety of Underling responded to the call, and when they had all assembled they quacked like ducks, while, from the interior of the mountain, the voices of the Underling women were heard squeaking like so many mice in a barn. When silence had been with difficulty obtained, Finn, modestly confessing that he was king no longer, narrated in detail the misdeeds of Ekke Nekkepenn, pointed

out to them the destruction that awaited them at the hands of the Frisians, and asked them to resolve, one and all, what, under this heavy pressure, was to be done. The unanimous resolution was for war; the valiant little creatures declaring that the time was come when they must sharpen their knives and their teeth, dig up their axes and hammers from the ground, and fight. The meeting then broke up, and every Underling went to his own home to prepare himself for the conflict.

The noise of the assembly had been loud enough to reach the ears of the people of Braderup, whose town is in the vicinity of the heath. Feeling that she had been the innocent cause of the increased disaffection between the two races by whom the island was inhabited, Dorte Bundis, before the dawn of the following day, crept by the Giant Hill. Laying her ear to the threshold of the door, she heard Finn's wife rocking her baby's cradle, and singing these words:

"Lullaby, lullaby,  
Little baby do not cry;  
To-morrow Father Finn will bring  
A dead man's head, a pretty thing.  
Lullaby."

These words, childish though they might be, were of evil omen, and Dorte Bundis thought there was no time to be lost. So she lighted a fire on a hill near Braderup, this being the signal recognised by all the Frisians of Sylt that war was at hand. Soon there was a general drumming and horn-blowing throughout the island, and there was not so much as a village in Sylt which had not its signal-fire.

The gathering of Frisians from every part of the island was tremendous, and as every one came in a hurry with the armour that lay within reach, costumes were various, though the prevailing fashion was sheepskin or sealskin, with now and then the addition of a cow or horse-hide. King Ring, sometimes called the Sea Giant, looked awful with a gilt hat shaped like a boat; but he was surpassed by King Bröns, of Keitum, who rode with his son, in a gilded coach, and was properly equipped with a cuirass of chain armour, and a gilt helmet with an eagle on the top. Bull of Morsum (on the eastern branch of Sylt) had decked himself with a cowhide, the horns of which, gilded, projected over his head. Big Urdig carried an iron flail. Niss, the smith of Morsum, a man "expert in his potting," bore on his back a barrel of beer, and that his weakness might not be betrayed to the profit of others, vowed that it was his drum. He betrayed himself by occasional refreshments, so the others persisted that

Niss should march in front, while they adhered to the barrel. Tjöl, of Archsum, being of a cautious disposition, brought with him the door of his barn, which he thought would serve as a shield of large dimensions. Sialle, a fisherman of Eidum, had peculiar notions of warfare. He had crept into the whole skin of a porpoise, the head of the fish projecting far beyond his own, and the tail dangling behind. The smell of this armour was not pleasant, but far from considering that a disadvantage, he declared that his raiment was not only defensive, but so extremely offensive, that, of itself, it would suffice to repel a far-scented foe. Kialburg, also a fisherman from Eidum, bore the jaw-bone of a whale, with which he hoped to work wonders. Unding and Wirk, both of Rantum, had an eye to contingencies, and their armour consisted of strips of dried skate, while a good broad, entire skate hung on their backs; for, they said, they did not know what might happen, and they did not wish to die of hunger, if the fight lasted long.

When they were all assembled on the heath of Tinnum, a council was held, and it was resolved that nothing less than the extermination of the Underlings would insure peace and prosperity. Bull of Morsum, the Eagle-King of Keitum, and Niss, the Morsum smith, were chosen as leaders, and Jaspas, also of great repute, had the office of showing the way. That his duties might be efficiently discharged, he carried in his hand a staff, surmounted by a dead crow long enough to be seen by all who followed. When they had crossed the heath in a northerly direction, they were encountered by the Underlings, who, heathens as they were, at first exulted when they saw that their foes had no cross upon their banner. However, the noise of the drums was unpleasant, Tjöl, with his barn-door, looked unsightly, and the two warriors from Rantum, and the hero of the porpoise sharply attacked their nostrils, so that the poor little things crept into their burrows like rabbits. King Bröns, however, had a great dog, and when this had driven them out of their caves, they were shot down without mercy.

The Underlings contrived to poison the dog, and their extreme despair inspired them with courage. If the Frisians were strong, they were also unwieldy, and the active little creatures crept under their clothes, and killed many with their knives and axes. King Bröns and his son both perished, and possibly the Frisians would have ignominiously retreated had not their

wives come to their assistance, and thrown hot gruel into the eyes of the Underlings. A total rout of the Underlings ensued, ending in complete extermination, and King Finn, who had found his Sesselstein, when the fight was lost, stabbed himself at sunset with his stone knife, that he might not survive his subjects.

The above strange story is of historical significance, and of several of the incidents monuments still exist in the names of many places of the Island of Sylt, now a favourite watering-place with the people of North Germany.

## NOTES OR GOLD?

BY THE AUTHOR OF "NEVER FORGOTTEN," "FATAL ZERO," &c. &c.

### CHAPTER X. A NEW ALLY.

THIS incident soon got abroad in Brickford. It was a delightful piece of excitement, and people began to take sides in the matter. Every one knew that Lady Duke had come back to rescue her child, and the success of her attempt could, indeed, be read in the downcast, rueful faces of the family. Still she had not gone away, and what was more to the point, her son was still in the town. The whole was canvassed in the keenest way, Mr. Duke having "behaved infamously" according to some; but, according to others, it having only served the whole party right. But these were the views of ladies chiefly, who admired from a distance the noble youth. Mr. Nagle bore himself through the streets and other public places with the demeanour of a martyr. But he made no alteration in his proclamations. "Twas too late—the thing must stand or fall as it was." Mr. Nagle seemed to reckon that it would fall rather than stand, and with it all the fortunes of his house, and looked forward calmly to seeing the venerable Broadwood again in peril.

But the gallantry with which Will Gardiner took up the cause of the injured family was remarkable. He was obstreperous in his condemnation of the scurvy behaviour of his relative to a fine girl. "I declare," he said, "I could not have believed that Alf could have turned out such a pitiful skulker. She's a deuced deal too good for him." The only thing to be done was that all should strain every nerve, work heart and soul to make the affair successful, and the concert a bumper.

With this view he burst into the room of his relative, Old Doughty, whom he found, with his violin, absorbed in the



harmonies of the mighty Beethoven. An humble pianist of the town, such as Mr. Nagle would have described as "a mere stone-breaker, sir!" was thrumming an accompaniment at the piano. Will interrupted both. He boisterously insisted that something must be done for the Nagles. The other pettishly remonstrated.

"You are interrupting us. I can help no one. No one has ever helped me through life."

"That's good from you," said the intruder. "Where would your fiddle be but for the help you are getting from our friend there? Just lay it down a minute and listen to me. It's a very hard case."

In a very simple, natural way Will Gardiner began to pour out Corinna's story. He described the mortification, the humiliation of the poor girl, and the shabby, contemptible way in which her admirer had left her in the lurch. She had the noblest voice. The family were all musicians to the back-bone. The girl had shown a brave spirit, and let the fellow go without a word. Now something must be done. He, Old Doughty, knew plenty of "those German fiddlers who would come any distance for a pot of beer and a smoke." Could he not get them down to fill up the programme?

Mr. Doughty listened sourly to the depreciation of the members of his honoured craft, but still was interested. Anything about music had a dramatic interest for him. Will Gardiner saw his advantage, and pressed him hard.

"If you heard her sing—sing one of the melodies, or a thing out of a fellow called Gluck"—Mr. Doughty winced at the pronunciation where the composer's name rhymed to duck—"a song about Eurydice and Orpheus, my dear boy, you'd escape from your very skin."

"Ah! that's a song, indeed," said Mr. Doughty; "any one that could sing that—but it shows taste to have selected it. And she sings it well, slowly, solemnly, mysteriously, sadly?"

"Oh, I don't know about all that," said his friend. "But to hear her is enough to make you cry—"

"That is the reading," said the other, gravely. "But I am too busy now. Besides, you overrate my ability. I can do nothing for any one; I really cannot. I am not even a singer."

"Hang it! you can listen," said the other; "let me bring her up here; it will do neither you nor her any harm. Don't be ungallant, man alive."

Thus did he urge the matter, and so obstreperously, that at last he wrung a wearied consent from the other, who was panting eagerly to recommence that interrupted adagio.

"I'll bring her in half an hour," cried the enthusiastic Will, rushing away.

In the same eager fashion he burst in on the Nagles, who were dismally engaged in their preparations. Corinna was woefully disappointed when he revealed "that he had got the very thing that would do for them;" for she thought he brought what would be the only sort of good news for her. Mr. Nagle received it calmly and dryly; he had a contempt for the cultivated amateurs, whom he placed very low indeed in the musical hierarchy.

"It will do no harm," he said, "and it will be a civility to the gentleman. You may go, my dear. It shows a proper feeling on his part, and the more that rally round us the better."

Corinna, more from a wish to oblige her friend, than from any other motive, put her bonnet on, took her light roll of music, and set off with Mr. Gardiner.

They found Thomas Doughty in a curiously tightened little coat, bending over his viola, which lay nestling in its case, and which he seemed to be brushing or patting like a kitten in its nest. No kitten could have been as snug as that instrument; for it lay in a little bed of soft velvet nicely adjusted to its shape, with a richly quilted counterpane in which it was tucked up when put to bed. He raised his face as they entered, which was as anxious as that of any mother.

"Busy with the baby?" said Bill, noisily. "Here, I have brought a young lady to see you. Leave the wooden child alone, and attend to the handsome living—"

Mr. Doughty's thin lips tightened into a smile.

"I shall leave *you* alone," he said dryly. "Won't you sit down, Miss Nagle? Very few ladies honour me with a visit."

He was looking at her with a shy and curious interest.

"Oh," said Corinna, in her most natural way. "It is so kind of you to let me come, though I hear you are such a dreadful judge."

"Dear me, no! What nonsense the people do fill their heads with! Indeed, I confess to liking good old music, and some of the new, and can fairly judge of that; but as for pronouncing on the style of singing and playing pursued by the young ladies of the day, I confess I am utterly

unfit for that. I know nothing about it. They neglected my education." Corinna's speaking face told that she was mortified. He saw it. "Not that I doubt but that you are one that I shall like. You don't look like one of those who sit and work at their piano like factory girls at their frames. You have a charming musical face, suited to your name, Miss Corinna."

"Pon my word, Doughty," cried Will Gardiner, "well said. You have done wonders, Miss Corry. He doesn't speak that way to his fiddles."

"What is your favourite song?" said Old Doughty, calmly ignoring this tone of his friend. "Do not sing one of those confectionery ballads—pray don't."

"No," said Corinna, eagerly, "not for the world! I dislike them as much as you do. I brought this—what I like to sing myself—though it is not as popular as it ought to be—the scene from Gluck's *Orpheus*."

"That shows taste. So far, so good. Even if you sing it badly, Miss Corinna, I shall say you are a musician."

Will Gardiner, afterwards recounting this meeting, declared that the old "Old Doughty," with all his dryness and cantankerous flavour, seemed to float away, and a soft, gracious, human-like being appeared to take his place. His voice, he said, became insinuating, his eye gentle, and he seemed altogether youngish, if not young. Further, Old Doughty said, in a hesitating way:

"If you would not mind, I should like to accompany you."

Corinna accepted eagerly, and the connoisseur, placing himself at the piano, began the sort of dejected symphony that heralds the song. His fingers, small and delicate, were those of a gentleman, and touched the keys with a graceful though not powerful touch. Then Corinna began. She drew herself up, and poured out her rich full tones, telling the fine story with a feeling worthy of the gifted Viardot herself. As she proceeded, the cold dry face lightened, and was turned to hers: the delicate fingers became firmer in touch: the two performers, reacting on each other, produced a result that kindled the enthusiasm even of Will Gardiner, to whom these severer efforts were usually unintelligible.

"You do sing," said Old Doughty, warmly, "and you are an artist!"

"That song would make one sing," said Corinna, enthusiastically.

"It is noble and genuine, the truest ex-

pression of the situation. I tell you what. You are going to have this concert. You must sing this, and if you would allow me I should be delighted to hobble after you with the accompaniment."

"Well, well," thought Will Gardiner, "what is coming to the man! He can't be in love with the girl, of a sudden. Old Doughty is not weak enough for that."

Corinna was not a little flattered at this testimony to her gifts. But there was something which Mr. Doughty was not aware of, and this lent the dramatic impression. "What shall I do without my *Eurydice*?" ran the words of the song, and these were poured from Corinna's heart. For she was thinking of how she had been deserted, and how the sad wail was exactly in tune with her own heart. "What should she do without her *Alfred*?"

Other pieces of the same classical kind were then attempted. Never was there a more delighted audience.

"Yes," said Old Doughty, now as eager as he had been before cold. "We must try and give a classical tinge to this concert. I could telegraph to the Steiners, two splendid cello and violin players, and have them down by to-morrow night. We might have one of Haydn's quartets."

Suddenly Corinna bethought her of her father, who looked more to popular than to classical music. Then there were the posters.

"Oh I never thought of that," she cried. "Papa has chosen what I am to sing—it must be something light and taking."

"What?" asked Mr. Doughty.

"Oh, the *Dying Swan*, and——"

"What, one of those vulgar ballads?"

"No, no, not vulgar," she said, colouring; "it is very effective and tuneful."

"Never mind, we shall settle all that. I'll see him myself. Going? Well, I hope to see you very often. You have a noble voice, and a noble style. And your face so reminds me of—— Well, good-bye, Miss Corinna."

Mr. Gardiner and his companion went their way.

"I declare, my dear, you have quite thawed Old Doughty!"

#### CHAPTER XI. COLD WATER.

WHEN Corinna and her friend arrived to report progress, and while Mr. Gardiner was descanting loudly on the success of their mission, Mr. Nagle listened with scarcely concealed indifference.

"Corinna produces that result very often, I can tell you; but, of course," this

sadly, "no one ever asks, 'who set the types?' But that would never do, oh never! Glück is well enough at the Classical Sawpits—"

"The Sawpits?" said Will Gardiner.

"Yes, you know what I mean—where they grind old fogey music, all grave as undertakers, working as if they had saws and planes in their hands." Then confidentially, "There's no money in it, sir—no money in it."

"Oh, indeed," said Mr. Gardiner, greatly impressed.

"As for your friend Doughty, he is, no doubt, a creditable amateur. But, my dear sir, all the amateurs in the empire, boiled down and melted together, wouldn't be equal to one of the trade. It's all poor, my dear sir, wants the real beef."

"I see," said Will; "no money in them."

Still, these were strange doctrines to come from Mr. Nagle, who only that morning had enlarged to Mr. Duke on the surpassing excellence of the amateur: "You have, my dear boy, what we have not," &c.

He went on: "As for getting down any German scrapers, I wouldn't do it—no, not if it brought fifteen pound ten more to the doors. It's well meant, I have no doubt," said he, graciously. "And if he likes to come here and make his little suggestions I see no objection."

That evening Old Doughty actually presented himself, and was received with a kind of condescending loftiness. Mr. Nagle had, in truth, the greatest contempt for what he called the "starved old bachelor" class, who had accomplishments but little money. They were no good, in any direction, he said; did not want lessons themselves, and rather preferred giving them; and had no daughters or sons to whom "instruction could be imparted."

The truth was, Mr. Nagle's musical erudition and acquirements had once been signally exposed by one of these gentry, and the outrage still rankled in his breast.

As for the German scrapers, he put them aside after his own fashion. "It was a very nice thought; but the pigtail business doesn't do."

Mr. Doughty was glancing over the posters still displayed. "You don't mean to say you are going to put a girl of her talent to sing rubbish like that, Dying Swans and such wish-wash nonsense?" and he pointed with his stick to the obnoxious ballad.

Mr. Nagle coloured. "Wish-wash, sir! As good judges as you, sir, have pro-

nounced it first class. Ay, and better, too, sir."

"And perhaps worse, too," added the other, dryly. "No offence. I have not heard the music, so none can be meant. But, I entreat you, I beg, do something in the interests of genuine music! Give your daughter some chance of distinguishing herself, and don't profane her noble voice and herself by such things. Do something for art, and don't turn it quite into a tradesman's business."

"Oh, my good sir," said Mr. Nagle, impatiently. "Don't teach me, pray, at my time of life; I am a little beyond that. No, we really can make no alteration in the programme. It must stand."

"But you know it is altered already, and does not stand," said the other quietly.

Corinna's eyes flashed, she drew herself up. Old Doughty saw what he had done, and actually coloured.

"I did not mean—" he said, his voice actually faltering.

"You did not mean?" said Corinna, with a scornful slowness.

"No, I did not," he said in a low voice, "so far as you were concerned. I am a dull and stupid solitary. However, as I may not help you, I must go."

"I am exceedingly obliged to you all the same," said Mr. Nagle, loftily; "but really I tell you frankly, you could have been of little use to us."

"I am inclined to agree with you," said the other, dryly. Then turning to Corinna, "I wish you would do that for me. I do not like the idea of genius like yours being profaned by flimsy ballads. It's immoral," he said, almost vehemently. "I would not see your beautiful robe trailing through the dirt."

Certainly, this Old Doughty was a very strange being, and Corinna looked after him, wondering, as he left the room.

On the next day one of Will Gardiner's stock stories at the houses he visited at, and to the people he met in the street and elsewhere, was the sudden change in Old Doughty. The man was transformed, he said; the girl was a witch. Had he not always said there was a secret charm about her? Any girl, of course, knew enough of her trade to captivate the young fellows; but to soften an old dried bit of timber like that, was a miracle. She was a perfect enchantress; and mark his words, one of these days, "she would snaffle a lord." Old Doughty had warm blood in him still, and he declared he began to respect him, now that he began to show

that he could admire a fine young woman like Corinna. He wished the old bachelor had a couple of thousand a year, and they could easily get up a match between the pair. At all events, he would go and ask Old Doughty to dinner again, and tell him that he had behaved like a man. All this caused a good deal of amusement among the Brickford folks. But all this while, Will Gardiner never lost sight of the main point, and forced his tickets on the people he met, as a conjuror would force his cards.

Notwithstanding the defection of Mr. Duke, who was sadly pronounced by Mr. Nagle to have shown the cloven hoof, the concert promised well. Nothing more gallant or heroic could be conceived than the bearing of Corinna, who, as she was confronted by curious female eyes in the streets and other public places, met their gaze with a haughty composure, though her heart was filled with mortification. For the last piece of news was that the faithless lover had indeed succumbed to maternal influence, and that they had both quitted the town. The lady retired in triumph, not merely bag and baggage, but with her captive also.

The night had now come round, and everything promised well. A handsome amount of tickets had been disposed of. Mr. Nagle was not to be spoken to, and seemed to be marked "dangerous." His eyes, as they encountered other eyes, peered into the mist beyond; of ordinary mundane things he seemed now to have no ken. He was spurring down to the rooms every hour, and appeared overpowered with quite a weight of business. As the hour of commencing drew near, at least two or three private carriages—for Brickford did not possess more—came driving up; and the large room, showing its staring white and circular gallery, standing propped on attenuated legs, like an old sideboard, gradually filled. There were reserved seats and stalls, and what Mr. Braham Nagle described, with infinite disgust, as "the shillings." Yet a good many of these obnoxious places were being secured with alacrity.

Now the performing party was dressing for the exhibition. An anxious moment—the fly waiting at the door—Mr. Braham Nagle investing his neck with a stiff George-the-Fourthian white neckerchief. Corinna

was waiting in the drawing-room, her music ready before her, and looking like some stately high-born maid. Her hair was bound with a golden fillet—magnificent hair it was—and, pale and scornful, she seemed like some inspired Grecian poetess. A thousand emotions were working within her. She was "heart sore," as her father would have said, chilled, but not crushed by the cruel desertion of her lover. They were too poor, she felt, for her to enjoy the luxury of dejection or despair; she had determined to stamp out all that was left of love; and on that night, at least, wipe out the mortification by a triumph. With this view she had formed a bold resolution. She *would* sing that song of the deserted Orpheus, wandering hopelessly desolate, *Che farò senzà Eurydice*. Into that lament, at least, she would put her whole soul. As for miserable ballads, even the Dying Swan, she felt that she dare not attempt them. Her soul recoiled from such things with loathing. Were she to attempt them she knew she would fail ignominiously; in such stuff she could find no food for triumph. And it must be added, that she felt a wish that she should win the respect of that strange and critical Old Doughty, in whom she felt a sort of pitying interest. In the ante-room of the concert-room, just before going on, she would tell Braham Nagle what she had determined upon. She was a devoted and affectionate daughter; but on one or two occasions, when the family honour or dignity was concerned, had made a firm stand, which her father had been unable to resist. She was looking forward with exultation to that triumph. *He* should hear of it afar off, and should learn that she had not been left a mere helpless, crushed, and deserted thing. He should learn that—

As she paced up and down she hardly heard the maid of the lodgings, who had repeated twice that some one wished to see her.

It was a gentleman. It was Mr. Alfred Duke! There he was rushing in, eager and penitent!

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